



Little Houghton CEVA Primary School Attendance Policy

Our Vision for Little Houghton CEVA Primary School 'Learning for Life'

Through:

- ❖ **Growth – realising our potential**
- ❖ **Community – sharing and contributing**
- ❖ **Spirituality – reflecting and thinking deeply**
- ❖ **Environment – appreciating local and global environments**

So that each child can flourish – like a flower of the field (Psalm 103:15)

Mission Statement:

We aspire to attain high academic and moral standards, and to encourage emotional and spiritual development, based on the values of the Christian faith.

Our sense of community is reflected in our Ethos Statement:

We are a Christian school working in partnership with parents and the wider community:

- Which maintains a welcoming, secure and inclusive environment
- Where God's love is demonstrated and taught and where the emphasis is on the value God places on each individual
- Where we promote personal responsibility, good citizenship and Christian and British Values that develop high behavioural and moral standards based on the teachings of Jesus Christ
- Where we aspire to attain high academic standards, enable pupils to achieve their full potential and develop a lifelong love of learning
- Where true faith and sound learning flourish within the traditions of the Church of England
- That reflects on the spiritual values of the Christian church
- That epitomises core Christian values

We seek to work in partnership with parents to ensure that each child's experience is one that will enable them to make good progress by building on their skills and talents within a continuous and consistent learning environment. If, together, we are to achieve this aim, regular attendance at school is vital and full parental support and co-operation in this matter is necessary.

Why is it important for children not to miss school?

Children only get one chance at school. If they do not attend school regularly, they may not be able to keep up with their school work or could miss whole sections of the curriculum. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help children later on in life.

Pupils whose attendance is good:

- Understand lessons better
- Achieve better results
- Sustain friendships
- Have good self-esteem and are positive and confident
- Get better jobs in the future

Pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory:

- Don't understand lessons so well
- Get behind with their work
- Find it difficult to maintain friendship groups
- Have low self-esteem/confidence
- Achieve less

What does good attendance mean?

- 100% attendance - when a pupil arrives on time and attends every lesson every day
- At Little Houghton CEVA Primary School we expect all pupils to achieve 95% attendance or above

What does unsatisfactory attendance mean?

- Attending 90% of the time or less. This will have a serious effect on learning
- One half day's absence every week will give 90% attendance
- Continual lateness

What happens if a child is late?

Children are expected to be in school for 8.45-8.50 a.m. so that the register can be taken by 9.00 a.m. Any child arriving after 9.00 a.m. (unless collected from the bus by a Teaching Assistant -TA) should enter the school via the office and parents should sign the late book, giving a reason for the lateness. This will be recorded in the register as late. Any child arriving after 9.30 a.m. will be recorded as absent for that session, unless the office has been notified otherwise. Pupils who are consistently late, are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. If a child arrives after 9.30 a.m., with no reason given by their parent, this will constitute an unauthorised absence. If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a letter will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness and to ensure that punctuality is maintained. Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Education and Inclusion Partnership (EIP) team. Letters will be sent out to parents whose children are persistently late and a meeting will be arranged if the situation does not improve.

From 1st September 2016

Government guidelines prevent Head Teachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during term time does not fall into the category of "exceptional circumstances".

The West Northamptonshire Council/WNC criteria for issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised term time absence is 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within a 6 week period.

As a result, we will refer any unauthorised absences which meet this criteria to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team for consideration of further action and the outcome could be a Penalty Notice, payable direct to the Local Authority. The Penalty Notice is £120 per parent/adult for each student to be paid within 28 days, decreasing to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may instigate legal proceedings under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

The following is a list of allowable absences and those that are classed as unauthorised absences.

Allowed absence

- Sickness
- Emergency medical appointments
- Days for specific religious observance
- Specialist medical appointments
- Family bereavement
- Examinations off site

Absences classified as unauthorised

- A child is kept off school because a parent is ill
- A child is absent because a sibling is ill
- The parent cannot get the child to school
- The child is taken on a shopping trip
- The child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat
- A child is absent due to family work patterns
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
- A child arrives at school after the register has closed
- A routine dental & optical check-up takes place
- A family holiday has been taken no matter what length
- Family trips
- A family leave early to travel to an event

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and shared with parents at Parents' evenings.

On advice from NCC's Education and Inclusion Partnership (EIP) team, the school will report to them any incidences where a child has accumulated 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any 6-week period. The EIP will then apply their Fixed Penalty Code of Conduct, a copy of which is available on the school website in the Policies section.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents, in the annual Governors Report and to the DfES.

Parents have a responsibility to telephone the school if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment the class teacher must be informed before the appointment. The school should also be shown letters and texts, which confirm the appointment.

If a parent has failed to contact the school by 9:30am on the first day of absence, the school will telephone the child's home to find out why the child is not in school. If contact has not been

made after the second day of absence the Head Teacher may inform the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

School work will not be set by teachers for children to access during term time holidays. Parents of children in Year 6 are particularly requested to avoid taking any holiday in the first half of the Summer Term when the end of KS 2 statutory tests take place. All other requests for absences due to other circumstances must be made in writing to the Head Teacher in advance.

From the beginning of the academic year, 2015 to 2016, the government reduced the persistent absence threshold from 15 per cent to 10 per cent. Therefore, **a pupil is considered to have persistent absence if their attendance falls below 90%.**

This equates to 38 sessions or 19 days of absence across the year or 3 ½ days per half term. Analysis of our attendance data will identify those pupils whose attendance is at a level which causes concern.

Our strategy for addressing these concerns is to:

- Contact parents via letters to remind them of the need for regular attendance and punctuality and to encourage improvement
- Invite parents to come and meet with us to discuss any difficulties they may be experiencing
- Explore ways in which the school can support the parents, where possible

What does 90% Attendance mean?

- **90%** attendance = ½ **day missed** every week!
- Over one school year this is 4 weeks of learning lost!
- Over 5 years at school a child will have missed half a year!
- 8 days absence = 96%.
- 19 days absence = 90%.

Minor ailments, such as a slight cold, are not considered acceptable reasons for not attending school. We realise that any child can suddenly fall ill and be unable to attend school but repeated absences may require us to request medical evidence from your doctor's surgery as confirmation of these absences. This is in-line with recommendations by the DfE and Local Authority. Similarly, if a child has persistent absences due to illness or has an unexplained absence we will require confirmation via a doctor's note.

A print out of each child's record of attendance will be shared with parents at Parents Evening. The Head Teacher will keep the stakeholders informed about attendance matters via the Head Teacher's Report and newsletters.

We believe that the majority of our parents realise that 'every lesson counts' and encourage regular attendance at school. We also realise that the vast majority of parents do not take family holidays in term time as they recognise the significant impact this can have on their child's education. We support the government's stance on trying to reduce the amount of school missed due to holidays and we hope that you will continue to support us by not planning a leave of absence during term time.

We have high expectations of our children. These expectations cannot be met if your child is absent.

Carolyn Fairbrother
June 2022